

NEW
SERIES

OCTOBER

VOL.
32

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM
YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round

a
Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

PART 179.

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LONDON
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W.C.

1833.

Nos.
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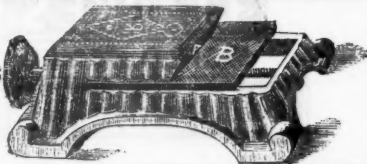
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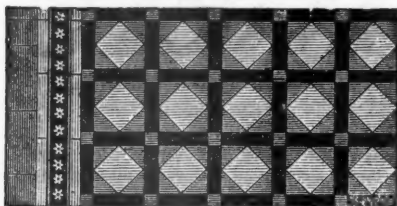
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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1883.

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BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XX. IN SOCIETY AGAIN.

MRS. HATTON wrote what is called "a very good letter." Her style was lucid, terse, and telling. The morning after Captain Edgcomb accompanied the Rays to the "old masters," Mrs. Hatton penned one of her periodical epistles to Mr. Boldero.

"MY DEAR JOHN,—I have received the cheque; it is more welcome to me than anything else in the world would have been, always excepting your presence. Good old friend that you are, in befriending these ladies who live with me, how nobly you are helping me!

"I can still give you the assurance that they are very happy. They have resigned themselves to the new routine in a way that is admirable, and that I can't emulate. I am ungrateful, discontented, to say this, am I not? But it is true. That one little word justifies the utterance.

"As far as I can judge, Miss Ray has improved in singing marvellously. She is indomitably persevering in practising. Her heart is in her work, I feel sure, otherwise, perhaps, I should shrink from telling you that Captain Edgcomb went with her to the old masters yesterday, and dined with them afterwards. He is quite a 'beau sabreur;' still, if she were not so thoroughly absorbed in her studies as to be quite indifferent to him, from what I know of him I should be sorry to have to tell you he visits the Rays.

"About my hidden trouble. It is a hidden one still. Would that I could know for certain that it was a buried one. But this is a sad topic, and I will not enlarge upon it to you who have brooded

my life with brightness lately. Old Ann is still with me. The faithful creature regards you as my Providence, and insists upon it being my duty to tell you all that befalls me. In obedience to her I tell you now that I am going to break through my almost conventional rule. I am actually going to an At Home, an omnium gatherum of celebrities in art, literature, and the drama. It does not do for desolate women to rebuff those of their own sex who are well placed in the wicked world's estimation. Such an one has sought me—poor, humble, obscure little me—now.

"This is all my news. If you think I am wrong in letting the clouds lift themselves around me for a brief period, tell me so, and they shall gather over my head again without a break.—Believe me to be, my dear John, yours always sincerely,
MILLY HATTON."

"I have just written to Mr. Boldero, Ann, and I've told him all about knowing Captain Edgcomb, and meaning to go to Captain Edgcomb's sister's party; are you satisfied?"

Ann grunted a partial assent, which she instantly modified by asking:

"Have you told him you've let Captain Edgcomb think you're a widow?"

"There's no necessity for me to enter into the subject of other people's surmises about me," Mrs. Hatton said, putting herself into one of her pet postures representing hauteur; "besides, I don't know that Captain Edgcomb does think I'm a widow."

"If he thinks you're a wife, more shame to him to go getting you invitations to party-going without getting them for your husband too," Ann answered gruffly. But again Mrs. Hatton's seraphic smile disarmed even the servant who knew her well.

"You will go your own way—you always would; and, poor soul! I don't blame you for it now when there's little else left to you. But I wonder, that I do, that you're so ready to go to a frolicking at Mrs. Campbell's, considering the way her brother walked by your door, as if he hadn't entered it dozens of times, when he had his Miss Ray with him only yesterday."

"Her brother won't do that again, and his sister can't help his having done it once," Mrs. Hatton replied with that broad sense of justice which people are apt to display, when the display of it marches with their own ends. Then she folded and addressed her letter to Mr. Boldero, and laughed to herself the while at the thought of the vexed feeling which he could neither conceal nor express whenever she addressed him as "John."

She knew it annoyed him that she should do this, and yet though she had substantial reasons for not wishing to annoy him, she could not refrain from this small assumption of familiarity. He was too just a man ever to punish her for a trifle, however much the trifle annoyed him; and she knew this, and acted on the knowledge, and called him her "childhood's friend" and "John" whenever she had an opportunity, to his infinite distress.

Mrs. Archibald Campbell was very fond of her brother, in an easy, light, irresponsible way that never gave either herself or him any trouble. In the days past, when he had been semi-engaged to Effie—the present Mrs. Hubert Ray—Bell Campbell had, to please him, gone a little out of her way to show attention to the girl, whom she had never liked. It was her pleasure to try and please her brother. She never regarded such attempts as committing herself to anything, and so, when he had, on an unguarded occasion, told her that he "wished she'd be civil to an awfully nice little woman, a Mrs. Hatton, who lived in the same house as the Rays," she promised to be so.

"You mean you want me to invite her to my house, I suppose, don't you?" she asked. "Well, I don't mind doing that a bit; but will she care to come? Won't she be rather out of it?"

"Not at all. She's clever, and amusing, and interesting. She always gives me the idea of having tried two or three ways of life before she settled down to this one," Captain Edgecumb explained.

"And she's a great friend and ally of your Miss Ray's. That's reason enough

for me, my dear boy," his sister said, and Captain Edgecumb did not think it needful to enter into laborious explanations.

Now, it so happened that at this present juncture Mrs. Archibald Campbell was organising one of her monster meetings. She was quite sure of the presence at it of a vast majority of her own set, but, as usual, it was unavoidable that there should be a good sprinkling of outsiders. Her intimates asked for invitations for their intimates, and she was very good-natured, knowing the capabilities of her house to be great.

"I've sent cards to the Rays, and to their friend, Mrs. Hatton," she said pleasantly to her brother; and he, knowing that Jenifer had not a particle of inquisitiveness in her, felt that the intimacy between Mrs. Hatton and himself would now come about, and be accounted for in the easiest and most natural way. Mrs. Hatton, he felt sure, would glide into his sister's house, and take up her position there with a graceful readiness that would never suggest a doubt as to the length and strength of her acquaintanceship with Mrs. Campbell; and as Jenifer would ask no questions, Mrs. Hatton would offer no explanations. As for Bell, she would be too much engaged by her duties as hostess to be innocently awkward.

The perfect tact of the woman on whom he relied, and the perfect integrity of the woman he half-unconsciously honoured above her, came to his aid here. When Jenifer, seeing Mrs. Hatton in their own drawing-room one evening, said to her: "My mother is tormenting herself about getting me up fitly for an At Home I'm going to on Saturday at a Mrs. Archibald Campbell's. She has ideas about floral decorations that don't coincide with mine. If she consults you, please don't approve of wreaths of white roses round a black tulle dress," Mrs. Hatton replied:

"I thought white roses had ceased to grow on black tulle ages ago. You're going to Mrs. Archibald Campbell's; so am I—that is, I mean to go to-day, but society has few charms for me now, and perhaps by next Saturday I shall have chosen the better part, and decided on avoiding it."

"Oh, you know Mrs. Campbell, do you? We only know her brother, Captain Edgecumb. It's through him the courteous invitation has filtered to us," Jenifer said carelessly, and Mrs. Hatton intimated that she knew Captain Edgecumb also, but did

it so airily that Jenifer did not feel the slightest surprise or curiosity on the subject.

Old Mrs. Ray was suffering from a little perturbation of spirit. She knew that it was right that she should go with her daughter to this gathering, to which they had been invited by Captain Edgecumb's "people," as she called Mrs. Campbell; but the thought of going distressed her sorely. At the same time, it was not at all according to her idea of the fitness of things that Jenifer should appear alone. Therefore she hailed the announcement of Mrs. Hatton's going also with delight.

"You will be kind enough to chaperon my daughter, won't you?" she asked in Jenifer's absence, and Mrs. Hatton murmured:

"Gladly, if I go; but society has few charms for me now, and when the time comes I may not be able to overcome the shrinking I feel from it."

However, when the time came either the anticipated access of nervous timidity did not set in, or Mrs. Hatton made gallant efforts, and overcame it. Whatever the cause, the effect was that she went to Mrs. Archibald Campbell's At Home, and Jenifer went with her.

"You're not to be persuaded to sing for these people," Madame Voglio had said to Jenifer, when the latter said something about going to this gathering. "Remember, you are not to be either flattered or forced into singing in any public or semi-public way until I give you permission, and I shall not give you permission for many months to come."

"I don't want to exhibit, be sure of that, but this is a private affair, madame."

"Nonsense! private! nothing is private where press people meet in multitudes; moreover, I know the style of thing as well as if I had been on Mrs. Archibald Campbell's visiting-list all my visiting life. Her husband is a journalist, a dramatist, a musical critic, a magazinist, a pretty versifier, a clever general-utility writer, in fact; and her parties are good representative ones. Those who will write you up and down by-and-by will be there, and they must not have a chance of prejudging your singing and style. That they should see you is well; you are one whom men will want to see again. You will be thought of and talked about, but you must not be heard."

As they rolled along in the little

brougham which Mrs. Hatton had decreed must be hired for the occasion, Jenifer repeated a portion of what Madame Voglio had said to her about not singing, and added:

"So I sha'n't be able to pay my shot, as my sister-in-law calls it; and I can't help thinking that if my singing isn't worth hearing now, when it would be rendered gratis, it will never be worth anyone's paying to hear it."

"If you feel that the contribution of your presence, of your youth, and good looks, and freshness, won't be ample payment, what must I, a poor, worn-out, faded plant that has been out of the sunshine, and so grown weak and weedy for years, feel?" Mrs. Hatton said plaintively.

"For one thing, you talk better than I do," Jenifer said critically. "I shall be quite at sea, among all these people who all do something definite more or less well. I shall be afraid to open my mouth to anyone but Captain Edgecumb—indeed, I'm not sure that I sha'n't be a little in awe of him, too, as being, if 'not therose,' very near to it. Tell me of the most secluded spots in Mrs. Campbell's rooms, in order that I may know where to go when it's too painfully borne in upon me that none of them want me."

"How I envy the high spirits and self-confidence which enable one to contemplate a possible mortification from a humorous point of view," Mrs. Hatton said abstractedly, and Jenifer, feeling that she had affected rather than meant to depreciate herself, forgot in her contrition to pursue her enquiries as to the geography of Mrs. Campbell's rooms.

It was past ten o'clock when they arrived, and to Mrs. Hatton's genuine dismay they found themselves among the always-to-be-commiserated first-comers. It is all very well to callously aver that someone must be the first to put in an appearance at every place where men and women gather together for mutual entertainment. No statement of the kind does away with the suffering engendered by the circumstance. It is bad enough when nothing is likely to occur to throw down any little airy fabric that one may have erected; but under the conditions which fettered her this night, Mrs. Hatton found the situation horrible.

She grew nearly desperate when she heard herself announced, and found herself walking into the room with Miss Ray in her wake. Walking into a room in which

there were only three people—a gentleman and lady, whom she took to be the host and hostess, and Captain Edgecumb.

Nerving herself to the effort, she swept up swiftly to the lady who was leaning in an attitude of careless grace against the mantelpiece, and was beginning to behave as a guest should in spite of the gross negligence of the supposed hostess, when an exclamation from the latter checked her.

"Jenifer! Hugh, just imagine Jenifer being here and not letting us know she was coming! Why didn't you tell me?" Mrs. Hubert Ray continued, abruptly turning to Captain Edgecumb.

Then, as Effie looked Jenifer all over and questioned her closely as to the reason of her being at Mrs. Campbell's now, when, on a former occasion, she had refused to come with her (Mrs. Hubert), Captain Edgecumb and Mrs. Hatton got over their meeting and greeting unobserved.

"You thought Mrs. Hubert Ray was my sister, didn't you?" he asked, half-laughing at the mistake she had made.

And Mrs. Hatton, who was intensely mortified at having made it, answered less smoothly than usual:

"I took it for granted that as we are at least an hour after the time she put on her cards, that Mrs. Campbell would have been ready to receive her guests."

"Bell's often late. I tell her it's bad form in her own house. But you see most of the people who come here know one another so well, and know her so well, that it doesn't make much difference to them. You'll fall into the flow of the thing when you've been here two or three times. Do you know, I'm awfully glad to see you here to-night."

A little vindictive gleam flashed from her eyes; but he was looking away at Jenifer, who had been drawn to the far end of the room by Mrs. Hubert, and didn't see it. He only heard the tones, which were soft and smoothly pleasant as ever, in which she said:

"Are you glad? I had grave doubts as to the propriety of coming, I can assure you. Your memory is so bad, that I half feared I might hear you say to your sister, 'Who is that woman?'"

"My memory will never be bad where you are concerned."

"Then, is it your sight that is defective, and you couldn't see your way to my quarters the other day? Never

mind; I am not revengeful. My tone in speaking of you to Miss Ray was the extra essence of commonplace. My knowing you is a matter of no more importance in her eyes than the crossing-sweeper's knowing you, or a dog wagging friendly recognition of you."

"It's a matter of great importance in my eyes, at any rate," he said in a way that looked like ardent flirting.

At the same moment he grew conscious that Jenifer and Mrs. Hubert Ray were looking at him, and he wished the lady, whose friendship was so important to him, at the bottom of the sea.

Meanwhile Effie had catechised her sister-in-law.

"Who's that woman you came with, Jenifer? You live in her house, do you? Flora always said Mrs. Campbell got queer people about her. Did you see she thought I was doing the honours and receiving Mrs. Campbell's guests? A woman who could make that mistake would do anything. I stood like a stone and never moved a finger, yet she would have gone on smirking and palavering her way towards introducing herself if I hadn't called out to you. Look at Captain Edgecumb flirting with her now. Have you thrown him over, and is she catching him in the rebound?"

"I haven't thrown him over, but I think she is catching him," Jenifer said indifferently.

And then the room began to fill rapidly, and presently Mrs. Campbell was gliding about among the guests, giving to one and all the right words of welcome.

Not quite to "all," though, it must be confessed, for coming upon her brother and Mrs. Hatton in close conversation, she fell headlong into error, and gratified Mrs. Hatton intensely by saying:

"Miss Ray, of course? Shameful of me not to have been down to receive you. But Harry will tell you that I'm not to be relied upon, in consequence of my husband often giving me sudden work to do for him. Harry, introduce everyone who'll amuse her to Miss Ray, until I can come back and see to her well-being myself."

"This isn't—" Captain Edgecumb was beginning, but his sister was off before he could explain, and though he looked discomfited, Mrs. Hatton was suavely smiling.

"Don't be vexed," she whispered; "I will not be unduly elated at being mistaken for the queen of your soul! I will draw

the line sharply and clearly between what is meant for her and what is just ceded to me."

"Now you're unjust again," he muttered. It seemed to him that through the stupidity of others he was being forced into a sentimental situation for which he had no desire. But though this possibility annoyed him a little, he found it difficult to detach himself from Mrs. Hatton's side until he could secure someone to take his place.

In the course of her rapid progress through the rooms, Mrs. Campbell came upon Mrs. Hubert Ray and Jenifer.

"Ah, Effie," she began in her swift way, "it's like old times to see you here again; only it's not like old times to see Harry absent from your side; he's devoting himself to your sister-in-law to-night, my dear child; and though she is your sister-in-law, I can't endorse his opinion of her."

"What in the world do you mean?" Effie cried sharply; "this is my——" But Bell Campbell was a yard or two away from her by this time, greeting with more cordiality than she had displayed towards anyone else, a quiet-looking man who had just come in, and who seemed a centre of attraction.

"Never mind, Effie," Jenifer laughed, "I assure you I can readily resign my identity for the evening, and Captain Edgecumb for ever to Mrs. Hatton."

"But I won't have her taken for my sister-in-law," Effie said loftily. "Imagine a woman who could blunder as she did when she came into the room, being supposed to be connected with me! Hugh, come and hear how Jenifer's letting herself get merged in Mrs. Hatton." Then she told her husband of Mrs. Campbell's mistake, and he laughed at it.

"That will right itself soon; Jenifer's light won't be under a bushel long," he said, looking at her with wondering pride. He was astonished to find how much he was struck with Jenifer's looks, now that he saw them for the first time amidst these new surroundings. Perhaps the "surroundings" had a little to do with this. They were "distinguished celebrities," but beauty was not the rock on which they were likely to split.

"I suppose that man has just painted a picture, or written a book, as Bell Campbell is erecting triumphal arches for him?" Effie asked contemptuously; and someone standing near told her:

"That's the new American actor, Josiah H. Whittler." Then a hum of approbation arose, as the American actor had agreed to give a recitation.

PORT ROYAL.

A REMINISCENCE OF JAMAICA.

BEFORE going there, the name of this beautiful West Indian island always brought to my mind's eye visions of tropical grandeur, of stately breezy dwellings bowered in palms, of lavish, generous hospitality, with troops of smiling black servants, civil, kindly, oleaginous, and lazy—the Jamaica of fifty years ago, before the emancipation of the slaves, before the flourishing sugar-planters woke to find themselves penniless, and compelled to seek a home among the back-streets of London.

Of Port Royal, whither we were bound for a three years' stay, accounts had not been so rose-coloured. "There were the palisades, where one was buried; a sand spit; sharks; not a soul to speak to; not a flower or a blade of grass; and one's death usually took place within a month of landing"—such had been the cheering information I had previously received.

I was, therefore, the reverse of disappointed on landing at Port Royal one hot, steaming morning in February.

The voyage out is generally without incident, so admirably are those splendid West Indian mail-steamers navigated. Our fine vessel, the *Tasmanian*, going a steady thirteen knots, never stopped her engines, but for one five minutes, between Southampton and St. Thomas's. Her boilers never primed, her tubes never went wrong, her engines never gave out, but night and day throbbed smoothly, economically, and without effort, for fourteen days. Why cannot our men-of-war do the same?

Of the captain of the *Tasmanian*, now in his grave, it would be impossible to speak in too high terms—kindly, gigantic, courteous, a splendid seaman and navigator, a stern disciplinarian, but by turns gentle as a child and rough as a bear, the terror of evil-doers and the delight of the children. I have never seen these latter specimens of humanity treated with the distinguished consideration accorded to them in the *Tasmanian*. There were certainly charming holes on each side of the bollards, just convenient for expending a spare child or two; but the small people in the *Tasmanian* had nine lives, and did not avail themselves of such golden opportunities.

Our passengers were of the usual species—English, American, Spanish, Prussian, and Chilian, a consul or two, and a Haytien general, six-foot-three, dressed like a Bond Street "swell," with an admirable Parisian accent and a coal-black face. He was afterwards killed at Port au Prince, in one of the half-yearly revolutions, while gallantly fighting his way through hordes of infuriated rebels to the British Consulate. One lady there was who consumed eighteen brandy-cocktails per diem in the seclusion of her cabin, till the hawk-eye of our captain found out and put a stop to it; and a vegetarian, who devoured all our cauliflower, beet, and carrots, at table, before our seats were well taken, and finished up with several platesful of dates and oranges.

Everyone turned out pretty early in the morning of the fourteenth day to sight the Virgin Gordas, a dreary uninhabited group, with no signs of vegetation on their arid soil. As the rosy, misty dawn, chill and damp, was dispelled by the rising sun, we steamed past the ghastly form of the Rhone, lying still enough now beneath the waters, with one mast standing—a grisly warning to all comers. We remembered with thankfulness that the hurricane season was passed during which she had gallantly put to sea, and being unable to weather the rocks from want of sufficient steam-power, had stranded on them with cruel force, her officers and crew perishing to a man.

The entrance to St. Thomas's has been likened to the neck of a bottle, through which you shoot into a confined oblong harbour, crammed with shipping; but the steady practised eye of our captain threaded the great ship through them without a scratch. Then began a perfect saturnalia. The intercolonial steamers, one on each side, transhipping those of our passengers and cargo bound either to the Gulf or the Windward Islands, made noise enough, to which may be added the importunities of vendors of curiosities, who took up a position on deck for the day, from which they never stirred. The heat on board was intolerable. You scarcely wondered that, when yellow fever does visit St. Thomas's, they have a pretty warm time of it. Very peaceful the little Danish town of Charlotte Amalia looked from the shipping—white houses with red roofs dotting the hillsides in the shape of a horse-shoe. We escaped the turmoil for a few hours, landing at Water Island for a picnic, and, before going on board, strolling through the town.

There was everything you could want, but at greatly enhanced prices in honour of the mail-steamer's arrival, even to a pair of skates, which must have been taken for a bad debt. There was an article, certainly, not considered of much value, offered at a "tremendous sacrifice"—viz., a baby. Under the shade of a spreading tree, past which meandered a rather suspicious-looking stream, suggestive of dirty clothes and soapsuds, sat a pleasant-looking black girl. She was giving the poor little coffee-coloured child on her lap "a lick and a promise," fresh water not being much in vogue at St. Thomas. It was rather a nice specimen of West Indian manufacture. Seeing a look of interest in my eyes, her mind was instantly made up, and starting forward, she offered to sell it for six-and-sixpence. There were more, apparently, from whence it came, but as I have frequently been offered a black child at prices ranging from four pounds to six-and-sixpence, I think the maternal instinct may be sometimes overrated. I should not recommend future travellers to visit Water Island, as some of our party were feverish and ill for nearly a fortnight afterwards.

The captain had no voice left by the time we were ready for sea at seven o'clock, so vigorous had been his efforts to get us cleared in time to shoot the neck of the bottle stern foremost, while yet a little light remained. We were nearly leaving one of our number behind, for the Haytien general, popularly supposed to be the Duke of Marmalade, had begged that S. might be allowed to go on shore with him. We had luckily declined; and when seven o'clock came, and we were outside the harbour, we were thankful enough, for the general lost his passage.

Jacmel was our next port of call. A boat-load of Haytien officers, black as jet, bristling with feathers and epaulettes, came off to receive their general, and returned crest-fallen at his non-appearance, but bearing his numerous boxes with them. The remainder of the passage was muggy, stifling, and rainy. We worked, looked at the sea and the sky, at the children who toddled about poking their fingers into the hen-coops, at the dawning flirtations; walked, ate, slept, and the day was done. Earlier still, on the morning of the seventeenth day, did we leave the steaming cabins, and, well wrapped up against the cool wet air, paced about till the light of Morant Point was clearly visible, just on

that particular bearing, on our bow, where the unerring judgment of our captain decreed it should be. The blue mountain showed at dawn of day clear against the sky, but all the ranges sloping up to it are so high that its eight thousand feet looks nothing particular. There is scarcely a smooth slope anywhere, the surface all being crumpled up, like gigantic ridges of crape, with deep ravines between, gullies and tumbling water every here and there. Newcastle looked cheerful, its white houses just touched by the newly-risen sun; it is the military hill-station, three thousand five hundred feet; the quarters are built one above another till the ridge is crowned, looking from the sea like white stones cropping out on the steep hillside. It is healthy but damp, the clouds frequently going in at the window and out at the door.

The steamer slowed in Port Royal harbour, almost before we were ready, and a barge from the flag-ship *Aboukir* soon took us all on shore.

"No trees! not a blade of grass!" Why, our cheerful friends must have been dreaming! The Admiralty House is literally bowered in cocoa-nut palms, scarlet cordia, grape, and almond-trees, while the *Bougainvillea* and a gigantic lilac-creeper stretched their arms and tendrils over the trellis-covered walls. Figs, oleanders, pomegranates, delicate plumbagos, blue and scarlet, cast a refreshing shade upon the creeping grass, while pots of blood-red caladium and lovely odorous wax-plant, the faint penetrating scent of whose flowers stole through the house at night with the first breath of the cool land wind, made a really charming array of verdure. The house is very large, cool, airy, and pleasant, the vast sleeping rooms inside, with a wide closed corridor running all round. In the dining-room are two valuable oil-paintings by Sir Joshua Reynolds, of George the Third and his queen, in the first days of their marriage. A numerous and smelling colony of bats had established themselves behind the king, and had made a convenient hole for exit and entrance under his majesty's august foot. They were very soon disestablished. The drawing-room boasts of a still finer picture, also a Sir Joshua, of Lord Rodney, on the deck of his ship, surrounded by officers and friends, the traditional cock perched on a cask crowing at the moment of victory. This splendid picture is lent to the Admiralty House by the Jamaica Government.

Through the commodore's office a steep succession of steps lead to the top of the tower, quite the best place in Port Royal after sundown. Forty feet above the baking sandy soil was a weary climb, but the reward was equal to the exertion. Here were convenient seats, cool air, and absolute freedom from mosquitos. It was tenanted by myself morning and evening, and by several hideous, bare-pated, red-eyed, dissipated John Crows, the Jamaican scavenger, in form and size like a turkey, during the broiling day, with an occasional visit from the signalman to work the semaphore on its summit. From here, spread out as in a panorama, may be seen the men-of-war at their buoys, peacefully resting after a long passage, boats passing to and fro; the clean dockyard at your feet, with its rows of cocoa-nuts, some lofty, and almost ready to fall with the next strong gale, the others young, graceful, and vigorous—each one with a black and white ring painted on the trunk about two feet high to preserve it from the depredations of the tree-ants. It cheered one to see the busy forges and carpenters' shops teeming with life and activity. From the tower also on "mail days" a sharp look-out was kept for the flag always hoisted on the lighthouse when the English steamer hove in sight—a blissful event that happened once a fortnight, but one that did not always bring the joy anticipated—so few of our anticipations do.

Our first miseries were certainly owing to mosquitos, who had thirsted in vain for many long years for the blood of healthy English children, and now claimed ours for their own. What a sight were their miserable legs, rather like unto variegated sausages—blue, black, green, red, and so painful that they had to have them swathed in cooling lotions, and laid upon the sofas! Never, in any other place, have I seen anything like the vast army which drifted through the house towards sundown, each singing its own peculiar note, and giving the idea of a multitude of bands advancing from the far distance. A friend and companion in the form of a bottle of spirits of ammonia is indispensable; applied immediately, it causes the bite entirely to disappear within an hour. The mosquitos here were considered particularly venomous.

Port Royal, containing the naval headquarters, dockyard, and hospital on the West India station, is situated on the extreme end of the long spit of sand

which protects and forms the fine harbour of Kingston. The spit, formerly nothing but a dreary waste of shifting sand, has by dint of infinite patience and convict labour, become even verdant and remunerative. Scarlet cordia, wild grape, the palisade flower, a lovely creamy blossom, with glossy succulent leaves and twisted tendrils, together with thousands of fine cocoa-nut trees, clothe the once useless palisade. The work is done by convicts nearly out of their time, who, together with their warders, live in huts clustered round the lighthouse, and pass a not otherwise than merry and careless time, well clothed, housed, and fed, and with enough to do to keep them healthy. The sea side of the beach is firm and even, a line of outer reefs and cays breaking the violence of the waves.

Here may be found by a patient searcher the most perfect and symmetrical flat, oval, white smooth stones in the world. In a place where so little is to be done, it was a great amusement to make up a party, land on the outer point about five o'clock in a body, and continue the search till dark. Amply rewarded did we consider ourselves to be by the possession of half-a-dozen really good stones, to be afterwards painted and etched with dogs, ships, and faces, and used as letter-weights. Another valuable treasure found here is the horse-eye bean, of which bracelets are made for friends at home, who are good enough to like any rubbish if it comes from Jamaica. There are no shells on this beach, the waves having ground them to powder on the outer cays. The harbour side is composed of a chain of lagoons still and mysterious, surrounded with mangrove swamp.

On Gallows Point may yet be seen the gibbet, with a bit of rusty chain attached, on which Dampier, the pirate, and many other gentlemen of his profession were hanged. Tradition still whispers of hidden treasure buried near the gibbet at Gallows Point by Captain Kidd and his followers. These mangrove islets and swamps, commonly called the cockle-ponds, are held in peculiar dread by the Port Royal people, who will on no account brave the dangers of night among them. Superstitious to an absurd degree, they declare that duppies—i.e., ghosts—wander to and fro, and leap from islet to islet. No doubt the explanation would be found in exhalations of the will-o'-the-wisp nature, so common in Irish bogs. It is considered a certain cure for fever and

ague to sleep upon the ground among the mangroves for a week or so. People, however generally preferred the fever and ague. Mangroves grow to a height of twenty feet or more, drooping gracefully down to the water, where they again take root and spring up ad infinitum. Fine tree-oysters frequently grow upon the lower branches, as the rise and fall of the tide is very small. They are generally unwholesome, however, and we were nearly poisoned on one occasion by some which afterwards proved to have been impregnated with copper from an ancient slave-ship, sunk in days gone by, and grown over by the mangroves.

A worse amusement for the winter might be found for adventurous yachtsmen than searching for West Indian hidden treasure.

Most of them are tired of the beaten track, and to every one it is not given an ardent desire to offer up their lives at the South Pole, or to perish miserably of grizzly bears, snow blindness, gaunt famine, and ice-packs in Prince of Wales's Strait. A well-found yacht, with two or three friends—in case of a temporary misunderstanding with A, there would still be B to speak to—each fired with the spirit of bye-gone navigators, might start from Cowes, say in November; with a fresh easterly wind, the chances are that Madeira is reached in ten to fourteen days, from thence to Barbadoes about twenty days would be consumed, and finally, including stoppages, Port Royal might be reached about the new year. Three charming months would then remain, wherein, with the consent of the Jamaica Government, search might be continued morning and evening on a radius of a hundred feet or so from the gibbet on Gallows Point. The naval authorities will probably be found not very hot upon the subject; energies soon fade away in such a warm place, and I never succeeded in stirring up any enthusiasm in the matter. Traditions have no place in the Queen's regulations or Admiralty instructions, or even in the Commodore's Port Order Book, complete as that manual may be. I should suggest an intelligent old Port Royal man, who, after a stream of involved conversation, mostly quite irrelevant to the subject, would finally remember something his grandmother told him long years before about "de pirate goold." He would also provide men, and prodding-irons for the search. Great sea-chests of solid oak are said to be buried near the point, each one full of gold in ingots and coin, of old silver

plate, and rich jewels. A hundred years have passed, but the chests remain as if wrought but yesterday, black as ebony, hard as bog-oak, preserved from decay by the nature of the soil, and under the interlaced roots of the mangrove.

It was from Port Royal that Kidd and his daring men sallied forth to attack and conquer the Spanish ships, homeward bound from Cuba and the Spanish Main. For some years each fresh haul was brought into Port Royal, and carefully concealed till enough had been amassed, when they doubtless proposed to "retire from business with a competency." One unlucky day, however, arrived to the freebooters—perhaps they had sailed on a Friday that voyage—when circumstances over which they had no control made it impossible for them ever again, in this world, to revisit those glittering stores of gold and jewels, and thus the secret of the hiding-place perished with them. This is as it was told to me, with a finishing exclamation: "Yes, ma'; plenty of goold on the point, ma'!"

To pull through these cockle-ponds after sundown is a most gruesome business; all bird, insect, and reptile nature seems then to awaken, and to combine with the chill, black, glassy waters in giving you a "turn." Should you unwittingly have pulled too far, the black shadows on returning are so dense, that no opening or channel is visible till the boat's nose is pointed into the overgrown passage. We frequently contemplated with dismay the prospect of passing the night in the boat; frogs croak, birds scream, crickets and grasshoppers creak, while myriads of sand-flies and mosquitos make a furious onslaught on your flying forms. The landing-place is hurried past, where, in yellow fever times, each afternoon sees a fresh procession streaming up the path and into the graveyard. Don't land there after sundown, even in happier times, or you will be confronted by a quarrelsome line of land-crabs—not the edible ones—all on their way to spend the night among the graves, and turning aside to attack and tweak each other's legs off out of pure spite. They have even been known to show fight, and fly at the legs of passers-by.

The palisades, or burying-place, at Port Royal, once a forlorn and horrifying place, is now an enclosed and decent God's acre, where lovely young palms, scarlet cordia, and mimosa wave above and among the low graves of many young Englishmen, who

have found here their long home. Perhaps the handsomest tablet of red granite is sacred to the memory of poor Dr. Duirs, D.I.G., who perished at his post in one of the oft-recurring yellow fever epidemics, and whose death many a man in the service deplored. Gentle, courteous, talented, it seemed as if a better future awaited him than a lonely grave on the palisades. I very often went there in later days, after a little child of our own rested among the whispering branches of the palms, which nodded and swayed against the tombs, stirred by the first sighs of the cool land wind, and it may console many, whose dear ones lie here in their last sleep, to know that their resting-place is cared for, and even pretty.

Leaving the palisades, the coal-wharf is soon reached, where large ironclads can coal alongside in a few hours. There is now established here a club, reading-room, and canteen, where cricket and tennis, beer and skittles, can be indulged in, free from the delusions and snares of Port Royal. Passing the sea-wall of the dockyard, Fort Charles is the next feature of interest; called after our merry monarch, in whose time, and to protect the newly built town from the incursions of the Spaniards, Fort Charles was erected. The walls, enormously thick, have withstood the ravages of earthquake and tempest for two hundred years. What generations of roystering hard-drinking men have passed through the grey massive stone archway to carouse in the fine old rooms, and make night hideous, and the walls resound with their senseless toasts to "A bloody war and sickly season!" The tablets in Port Royal church, thick as they can stand, tell of the extraordinary horrors of yellow fever in the olden time. Fort Charles is silent enough now, except for the young artillery lieutenant, who braves the ghosts of men long dead—of whom there are several well known to the fortress—and paces the rotten floors and ramparts alone, his great anxiety being, not the ghosts, but how best to avoid the holes and pitfalls, and the tender places in the planks.

Between Fort Charles and the dockyard lies a waste of barrack-yard, officers' quarters, and powder-magazines, the latter extending to the point, where also are sick quarters for the military. The point and its cocoa-nut grove is rather a favourite rendezvous after sundown. From here it is curious to see a great ship come in, passing so close to the steep beach, here

running down like a wall into deep water, that it is difficult to believe she will not ground. Passing through the tumble-down collection of old houses called "the town," a delusive name which it certainly does not merit in these days, you reach the naval hospital, a well kept and admirably conducted range of handsome buildings. In the garden surrounding the deputy-inspector's house, and also those of the surgeons, a really surprising horticultural result has been obtained, by dint of the greatest patience; English roses in tubs, and many rare and lovely flowers, being tended and nursed with touching care. The soil is pure sand, sea-water appearing at a depth of eighteen inches; these gardens have, therefore, been made, as has also that of the Admiralty House, little by little, as a bird builds its nest, by means of black earth brought down in bags from Rock Spring, the naval watering-place at the head of Kingston Harbour, ten miles away, supplemented by manure from the only animal permanently resident in Port Royal, the dockyard mule. Every leaf that falls, every morsel of vegetable refuse, contributes to the general result, and were fresh water less precious, a Garden of Eden might rise out of the salt sea sand. Our sailors are extremely well cared for in this fine hospital, but they are by no means fond of being in one of the great wards alone, as, like Fort Charles, the hospital has a "bad name" for "duppies."

The streets of the town are narrow, dirty, and reeking with an indescribable odour of unwashed black people, goats, and stuffy houses. In each small room an average of eight people have slept; and as there is no spring in Port Royal, and every drop of water is brought from Rock Spring in fine sailing tanks, and sold by the naval department at a quattie (threehalfpence) a cask, there is naturally no unnecessary washing of bodies or clothes. Goats thrive apparently upon broken glass, match-boxes, and dirty rags; there seems, at all events, to be nothing else for them to eat, unless it might be a baby or two, whose absence would never be missed among so many.

A real, fat, shiny black baby is far from being a disagreeable object, but the mongrel type is. There is something absolutely uncanny in being stared at by a dull, dusky, muddy little face with reddish hair, rather light eyes, enormous blubber lips, and protruding stomach propped upon spindle-shanks, with the leg

in the middle of the foot. The two types do not assimilate. There are perhaps few countries under English rule where to marry and be given in marriage is considered so superfluous an affair. Fresh from home it is rather a shock on reading the local papers, to see announcements made quite naively and as a matter of course, that with us would be concealed not only till death, but long after: "The friends and acquaintances of Mr. W. T. Taylor are requested to attend the remains of his mother, Miss Mary Cole, from his residence, Number Five, Lower East Street, to the place of interment at four-thirty this evening. Please let your carriage attend." Returning the call of a visiting acquaintance once, I was presented with much formality to "my wife's mother, Miss Barnes," and received with affability by a starched saffron-tinted female of severe aspect. Among the lower orders a stray child or two comes as an accidental occurrence, and it is the mother, poor thing! who has to bring it up and feed it; beyond this its wants are few: one little ragged shirt per annum, a corner under the bed, a tuck-out of yam and mealie per diem, and a bit of sugar-cane to suck at, is all they ever get. A wedding is far too expensive an affair to be entered upon lightly; everything must be en règle, or not at all; thus it is often put off from year to year, because nine pounds is required for a stiff white corded silk for the swarthy bride, and another ten pounds for expenses, none of which is forthcoming. The bride's attire in a general way does not suggest a necessity for such splendour; a black cotton garment, washed and worn to a dirty green, together with a gay turban smelling much of cocoanut-oil, usually adorns her person; but it is the custom, and they will not be persuaded that to hoard for long years, only to squander all on the wedding-day, is wasteful and ridiculous. Many good clergymen never take a marriage fee, hoping thereby to encourage weddings.

One of these half-caste women, a nurse in our family, and a widow—still, I am happy to say, flourishing in Port Royal—was the most patient, unselfish, and kindly of human beings, and an invaluable nurse in sickness. Lying dangerously ill for many weeks, and awake every half-hour during the long night, I never failed to see her, mute and motionless, sitting outside the mosquito-net, her mild eyes fixed on my face with untiring solicitude, quite heedless of the swarms of

mosquitos buzzing and whirling round within an inch of her face. Her watch over, she would glide noiselessly away, eat some food, and betake herself to bed, when, carefully wrapping head and face in a thick woollen shawl (thermometer about eighty-eight degrees in the shade), and placing her uncovered feet on the pillow where the head ought to be, she would sleep face downwards comfortably for many hours. Beloved by the children, she was certainly over-indulgent. I remember a small child of three or thereabouts snatching the turban off her head, and trampling furiously upon it—this was particularly insulting—but instead of administering condign punishment, the good creature sat herself quietly down on the floor, and lifting her eyes, full of sorrowful reproof, upon the small despot, said, "Dere's a trial—dere's a ting!" This was too harrowing, and brought the despot to terms and a flood of tears. This good woman's mother was a Haytien woman, black as night, her father an Englishman of the better class.

There are a few good-sized houses in Port Royal, in some of which, on the advent of any fresh ship of war, night is made hideous by the squeaking of fiddles and the distressing and worrying vagaries of a French horn, imported from Kingston for the occasion, consequent on a "dignity"—i.e., a dance—going on. I am not well up in dignities, but I was informed that towards morning the smell of active swarthy and perspiring humanity is quite too much for an English stomach.

The church is a cool, substantial building, but melancholy with reminders of yellow fever, the histories of which, as set forth on tablets erected by sorrowing relations, you can contemplate at your leisure during the lengthy service. We, however, always went to church on board the Aboukir, the stationary flag-ship. There is no school in this town, where there are three hundred children under twelve years of age. A few little ones of richer parents are collected together on Sundays by the Wesleyans and Church people; but this vast population is growing up, and has done so for several years, absolutely untaught, learning nothing whereby to make a living in the future, knowing nothing about God, except as a fearsome being invoked by drunken and profaning lips. If some of the enterprising men who waste their lives in trying to convert the unwilling Chinese, would only convey

themselves and their energies to Port Royal, our own colony, I can promise them a hearty welcome, and a positive assurance that they will here neither be put in a cage, nor roasted alive. It is astonishing what charms such a prospect appears to possess for some otherwise quite sane people.

Should some of these really self-sacrificing and excellent missionaries and scripture-readers prefer a heathen land, and therefore decline a well-known English colony, I can assure them that there are in Port Royal (I do not speak of other parts of Jamaica) many hundreds of pure heathens, but with the advantage of being, so to speak, able to comprehend and talk English; charmed beyond measure at any notice taken of them; delighted to listen; extremely fond of singing hymns, with most melodious voices of great compass, and really proud when they have, as they express it, "got religion." And as to climate, I can only mention the fact that we were one year and seven months in Port Royal before there was a funeral among the white people—and we had seldom fewer than four or five men-of-war at anchor at one time—to show that, except in a yellow fever epidemic, it is a very healthy place, though, of course, exhausting to an English constitution, and to those obliged to be out much in the sun.

The subject of schools was very near my heart, and I laboured scarcely less hard than a galley-slave, to make money enough to re-establish the schools. Aid was asked from the Government of Jamaica and from the Board of Admiralty, but the Church being disestablished, and board schools with Government inspection reigning in its stead, a standard had to be obtained before a Government grant could be given. How could any standard at all be arrived at, even the lowest, where none of the children could read or write, and the very school-house was occupied by some department of the colonial service?

The Admiralty reply was, that they had no available funds. All efforts were, I grieve to say, quite fruitless, and Port Royal remains as I found it, school-less; but plus a sum of money lodged at interest in the Kingston Bank.

It is often spoken of, especially by those who contribute to make it so, as a godless place, a sink of iniquity. We should be little better ourselves, had we never known the difference between right and wrong, between shame and a reputable life, if we

saw everybody doing just as they pleased without rebuke. It is hopeless to turn the course of a life passed in crime, except by a miracle; but we can train up the little ones, and so form a new generation—new in habits, in feeling, in speech, who will insensibly influence the old, and thus in time bring about a better state of things.

NOTE—Since the above was written I rejoice to say all is changed. I have in my possession, sent me by the bishop, a photograph of the nice new school-house erected close to the church, and opened a few months ago. An account written to me by the able and excellent archdeacon represents an awakening of better times for Port Royal, which has given me the greatest pleasure and satisfaction.

THE LOVE-BIRD.

A LOVE-BIRD came to the window-pane,
His song rose sweet and clear,
Ever again the strange refrain
Fell on my listening ear.
Tweet, tweet, look up, my sweet,
Your love is near.

Ah! but my love is far away,
Sailing the summer sea,
Many a weary night and day
Must pass ere he come to me.
Peace, peace, love-bird, and cease,
It cannot be.

He only shook his golden wings,
His song rose loud and clear,
As if he knew and heard the things
I could not know and hear.
Tweet, tweet, look up, my sweet,
Your love is near.

Ah! but my heart is full of tears,
My life of misery;
My nights are haunted by the fears
Of wind, and waves, and sea.
Away, away, love-bird, I say,
It is not he.

A step, a climbing up the stair,
Whose voice is this I hear?
The love-bird shook his pinions there,
And, ah! his song trilled clear.
Tweet, tweet, look up, my sweet,
Your love is here.

ON COMING BACK TO TOWN.

THE holiday season is drawing to an end. Once again the streets, for a few weeks empty, though neither swept nor garnished save by wisps of straw and litter of paper, re-echo to the rattle of hansoms and four-wheelers returning, more or less encumbered with trunks, portmanteaux, and perambulators, from the various big railway-stations. Drawing-room windows are being stripped of their barricades of brown paper; and clean curtains and bright-coloured asters and evergreens take the place of fly-speckled shutters and skeletons of summer flowers dead and dried through lapse of long, unwatered weeks. Starving cats cease to prow round

the areas of deserted mansions, and smart servant-maids bemoan their mistress's return, and exchange confidences as to the festive days of their past freedom. It is paterfamilias's turn to look grave, as, having doffed the careless bonhomie of the irresponsible idler with his suit of grey and straw hat, he tots up the amounts of accumulated hotel and lodging-house bills with a brow ominous of briefer holidays in the year to come; the while mamma and the girls hold anxious conclave over torn dresses and sun-faded hats, and assert with emphatic decision that the summer is over, and they "have not a thing to put on." Truly the gay glory of the Park is over for the year; and even the trees, still robed in richest green in country lanes, begin to shed their dry and yellowing leaves upon the dusty pavement. The theatres are opening one by one for the reception of their respective "stars." Campbell's "last man" has ceased to smoke the solitary weed in his deserted club, and friends "who happen to be in town" to shun a casual rencontre as they might the conviction of a shameful sin. Our summer holiday is over, and as we settle down again to the old routine of life it is pleasant to look back on the changeable scenes through which we have been passing, and compare experiences with our friends as to the relative merits of the hotels at Windermere, Brighton, or Baden-Baden, where, for the time being, we have merged our respective individualities, and enjoyed that thorough rest and change from domestic cares and the reserves and prudences of domestic life, which is in itself a novelty and dissipation to the normal Englishman and Englishwoman.

Is it, I wonder, for the very charm and boon of an escape from these that year by year these swallow-flights from home become more common and more frequent, extending downwards in the social scale at the same time that they increase the outer margin of their radius in an ever-widening circle?

It used to be only London, which once a year disgorged a portion of its dust-dried, soot-smothered inhabitants and sent them forth in quest of green pastures and pure air; only the upper classes in London, too, who made themselves an object of envy to their poorer and humbler brethren by this coveted indulgence; but nowadays the good people of Wigsby-under-Coombe find it as needful for their healths to seek the gaieties and salt-breezes of Brighton or

Bournemouth as those of Bloomsbury and Paddington do to emigrate to the green woods and meadows which the former have vacated. Jim Muggins leaves his eel-pie shop in charge of the boy, and takes "his missus and the little 'uns to Margate for a blow" at the same time that Lord Norman Bluegore puts himself and my lady into a Pullman's car 'en route' for Argyle-shire or the Engadine. Billingsgate is no longer to be outdone by Belgravia; and in the epidemic of running away ladies and gentlemen leave their pretty country homes, just as the roses are blooming and cherries ripening, with as much eagerness as though they were over-worked East End clergymen escaping with their pallid wives and pasty children for a brief breathing space from the smell of slums, and babel of brick and mortar.

The fact is, it is not so much pure air, or green leaves, or even sea-water and sea-breezes that people crave for nowadays when they go from home, as fresh ways of living, fresh habits, and fresh minds. Fashionable physicians prate of change of air, but fashionable patients care far more for change of faces and change in everything, down to manners and even morals, if possible; and if they get these by leaving a wholesome air for an unwholesome one, and a comfortable house with every luxury in it for the fourth floor of an overcrowded hotel, and a hundredth part in the attentions of an overworked waiter, they are content. Why not? They couldn't get them by staying at home, and what is more, forty-nine out of fifty of them wouldn't if they could. They get quite as much good, and they know it, by the holiday from Tyburnian twaddle and tepidity, from South Kensington superciliousness and Belgravian "big swelldom," as the costermonger's baby does from its roll on Ramsgate sands, or the Rev. Simeon Stylites from his new-laid egg in a country farmhouse.

For ever so many scores of years, we, worthy Englishmen and Englishwomen, have been boasting of our domestic virtues; singing of our domestic bliss; hugging ourselves on our domestic decorum; crying up in season and out of season our reserve, regularity, and ultra-exclusiveness, and, by comparison, crying down the freedom of manners, easy etiquette, and suave sociability of less favoured countries; until this legend of decorous domesticity has become so much an article of faith with us that even when we would like to break through it we cannot. At any rate we dare not!

So it is that we go abroad, or to mountain-places and watering-places, and put ourselves to a vast amount of trouble and inconvenience as the only means of casting off our time-honoured trammels for a while, and enjoying in hotels and boarding-houses the novelty and freedom, the ultra-republicanism and un-English familiarities of table d'hôte life.

Take one thing alone. It really is very pleasant to be able to speak or be spoken to by our neighbour, if we feel inclined, even though he be a stranger to us, without the sensation of doing something improper and unheard of, or that terrible consequences may ensue from the liberty. Yet, till the last year or two, this was just one of the things most impossible to the ordinary English man or woman, by whom anyone attempting, uninitiated, to enter into conversation with them was set down as a thimble-rigger, sharper, or Lothario of the darkest dye, and answered, according to sex, by an immediate buttoning of pockets, or a stony glare, and the "Unhand me, sir!" of outraged virtue fifty years ago. Of course, people may laugh and say that we have altered all that, but I am not so sure that we have; or that the idea, even if less dogmatically enunciated, is any less recognised in practice than it ever was.

But at a table d'hôte all that sort of thing is done away with, and A talks to B, and C to D, in a free and spontaneous manner, and acquaintances are made, and even friendships contracted, without either knowing the name of the other, and with an ease and rapidity which are perfectly startling when one considers the national reserve under ordinary circumstances; and that it is quite possible for the very people so sociable here to have lived next door to each other in London for the last dozen years, and never to have exchanged word or glance. On the other hand there are, of course, people—don't we all know the severe family that one meets every now and then: papa, mamma, and two or three grown-up daughters—who would like to carry out the latter "régime" abroad as well as at home; whose one idea in travelling seems to be to consider that they are in a barbarous country, and metaphorically to entrench themselves as far as possible from any communication with the savage inhabitants thereof?

You may know these people by their invariably going about together in a compact body, as though there were some danger in being separated, and by their always

bringing with them a large quantity of needlework and dull, improving-looking books, with which they retire as far from the rest of the company as possible; and which they proceed to get through with an industry and regularity which is evidently the ordinary routine of their home habits. They never by any chance speak to any one outside their own circle, and to each other they discourse in aggravated whispers, thus recognising the presence of the enemies whom, otherwise, they ignore, or answer (should the latter be bold enough to address them) in the shortest of monosyllables. The daughters are generally plain, and the father carries a large watch, which shuts with a very loud click, and which he continually consults to make sure that the fixed hours for reading, reflection, and recreation are properly adhered to. The aim and end of their outing is summed up in one sentence in the ponderous diaries which they each and all keep: "We found X— delightful, and were able to keep strictly to ourselves and our own home ways and habits."

A wide contrast to these people are the sociable couple, who will make friends with everybody, and talk to everybody, and pour out their most private affairs to you, whether you want to hear them or not, even to "what the doctor thought of my husband's complaint before we left," and such matters. People of this sort are quite intimate with the waiters and chambermaids, call them by their christian-names; are distressed because the landlord has lost a brother; nod and smile to new comers as soon as they enter the room, and leave behind them the sense of their being old residents and habitués of the hotel, even if they have been only three days there. Besides these people, however, and besides the pretty, fast married lady, with the pretty, fast married friend, and the accommodating spouse, who is never too near her; besides the widow, whose weeds are so fresh that you think she can only just have buried her husband, and the widow whose weeds are so utterly wilted that you almost doubt her ever having been a wife; besides the newly-married couple, still so dreadfully spoony that they are always exchanging tender glances over their soup-plates, and make you feel as if you ought to knock at the door or cough before coming suddenly into their presence; and besides the prim old maid with ringlets and palpably false teeth, who looks as if no one had ever felt spoony towards her in

his life—besides these commonplace types of society, whom we meet at every hotel at home or abroad, there is generally a good deal of amusement for the observing mind in watching the individual oddities, or adventures of those about it; and to this the gregariousness and easy sociability of table d'hôte life certainly lends itself in a very pleasant and facile manner. One soon gets to know people by nicknames—such as "our friend with the nose," "Ringlets," or "the Snorter"—and even to speak of them as such to the neighbour on our right or left, who has become for the time being—and only by reason of such proximity—quite a confidential friend; while to discover a secret understanding between the young man who sits third from the carver and the young woman who has Number Nineteen on the first floor, and arrived a week before him, and to make wild guesses as to the relationship between the handsome lady of five-and-thirty and the slim young man of twenty whom she calls "George," but whose surname (on his portmanteau) is Jones, while hers (on her letters) has been ascertained to be Smith, is as exciting as a new play, and much more amusing than a three-volume novel. I well remember one hotel where we were all taken in by a young widow, whose lovely face and deep mourning habiliments excited universal sympathy and admiration. Her manners too, and her way of alluding to her husband, and her great and recent "loss," were the very perfection of gentle sorrow and sweetness; and the women were as much won by her as the men, until one day it was discovered that her widowhood was of the order known as "grass," and that the husband, so touchingly alluded to, had been lost to her, not by the tragic hand of death, but through the more prosaic agency of the divorce court.

Of course, however, the table d'hôte is not always either amusing or exciting. Occasionally you come across people who either bore or annoy you unspeakably; and it is not always easy to escape from them: people whose talk is unpleasant to you, and who will talk, regardless of any one's presence or occupation, in a loud, blatant voice against which there is no shutting one's ears; selfish people who invariably clutch at the only easy-chairs as their right, insist on the windows being shut on a broiling day, or open in a fog, and make everyone else uncomfortable; "bad form" people who take a pleasure

in scouting the proprieties; and prudish people who pull long faces at everything and want to turn the hotel into a conventicle. By-and-by, also, the constant succession of changing faces, in the beginning as amusing as the scenes in a play, begins to grow a little wearisome; and the elaborate dinners à la Russe, which at first tickled your palate and provoked odious comparisons as to the efforts of your own Mary Jane, pall upon you, and even make you wish once or twice for the variety of a homely meal, and the luxury of a single joint and pudding. There is a little difficulty too in deciding how far it is possible to know, or not to know, in London people with whom one has been friendly or even intimate at Homburg or Scarborough; and it is awkward if one has been flirting rather pronouncedly with the pretty lady-like daughters of a very pleasant old gentleman, to discover that the latter is a well-known West End tradesman living close to your own dignified mansion; and that the prettiest daughter tots up the accounts behind a little glass screen at the back of the shop. One doesn't like the idea of cutting those girls if one happens to meet them coming out of one's parish church on Sunday; and all at once the freedom and sociability of table d'hôte life seems to have its drawbacks. It has been very pleasant for the time, and has given us a host of new ideas and new feelings, which have a good effect on our nationally stagnant blood and narrow minds. But it is getting chilly. The thought of our own easy-chair at home, and the fireside where there are not a dozen strangers crowding to oust us from the most comfortable corner, glimmer pleasantly before our eyes. Even idleness loses its charm after too long a spell of it; and the old habits and occupations, which a few weeks ago were cast aside with almost exultant relief, rise up before one's mind with a sense of something pleasant and familiar. The final day comes. There is a hurried paying of bills, a rushing about of rapacious waiters and officious porters, a few hours of steam or railway, culminating in a view of towers and roof-tops looming through the well-known dim-coloured fog of old; and, suddenly as it were, we wake up in our own homes again with a feeling as if our ever having left them was nothing but a strange, bewildered, slightly improper dream; and with nothing left of the past weeks of idleness and variety, save a pleasant memory whose principal charm is, after all, that in

nine cases out of ten it makes the old life appear sweeter and even healthier for the brief experience of one so widely different.

WEREWOLVES.

THE idea of a being, half wolf, half man, and possessing also many demoniacal attributes, is a very curious piece of old-world superstition still to be found in very many European countries, and strengthened, no doubt, by the discovery, at times, of children who have been carried off and cared for by wolves who preferred the rôle of foster-mother to that of devourer—an occurrence of which there are frequent proofs on record. The wild and howling night winds, the Maruts that gave the name to our too familiar nightmare, may have given the first notion of demon wolves to the trembling listener as they passed shrieking by his solitary tent or hut. As these winds also represented the Pitris, the good patres or fathers, and the followers of Indra, the transition of thought by which the spirit-wolf and the human form became amalgamated is easily imagined.

There appears to be plenty of evidence that, at different times, a form of madness has broken out by which individuals have fancied themselves to be turned into wolves. Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, describes this disease, which he styles *Lycanthropia*, as "when men run howling about graves and fields in the night, and will not be persuaded but that they are wolves or some such beasts." He quotes authority for many instances; one, among the rest, of "a poor husbandman that still hunted about graves, and kept in churchyards, of a pale, black, ugly, and fearful look. Such belike," continues the garrulous old writer, "such, belike, or little better, were King Proteus' daughters, that thought themselves kine; and Nebuchadnezzar, in Daniel, as some interpreters hold, was only troubled with this kind of madness."

King James the First also speaks in a somewhat similar manner in the First chapter of the Third Book of *Dæmonologie*. Pliny states that men were changed into wolves, and again into men; Pausanias narrates a history of a man who remained a wolf for ten years; and Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses*, describes the transition of Lycaon, king of Arcadia, who was turned into a wolf as a punishment for offering human flesh to the gods.

A legend also speaks of one of the family of Anthos, who, selected by lot, proceeded to the shores of a lake in Arcadia, where, after suspending his garments to the branches of an oak, he plunged in and swam across. Changing into a wolf, he was condemned to wander for nine years; but should he have abstained from feeding on human flesh, he was permitted to resume his former shape by swimming back again, and regaining his clothes which were still in the tree.

Herodotus states that the Neurians became wolves for a few days once a year, and then returned to the form of men. Virgil and Propertius give the same transformation, and Petronius tells a story related by Nicros at Primalchio's banquet in which he (Nicros) set off to walk in the early morning accompanied by a "valiant soldier, a sort of grim water-drinking Pluto. About cockcrow, when the moon was shining as bright as midday, we came among the monuments. My friend began addressing himself to the stars, but I was rather in a mood to sing or to count them, and when I turned to look at him—lo! he had stripped himself, and laid down his clothes near him. My heart was in my nostrils, and I stood like a dead man; but he made a mark round his clothes and on a sudden became a wolf. Do not think I jest; I would not lie for any man's estate. But to return to what I was saying. When he became a wolf, he began howling, and fled into the woods. At first I hardly knew where I was, and afterwards, when I went to take up his clothes, they were turned into stone. Who then died with fear but I? Yet I drew my sword, and went cutting the air right and left, till I reached the villa of my sweetheart." Here he is told that a wolf had been at the farm and worried the cattle, but that a slave had run a lance into his neck, so he sets off home as fast as possible. "When I came to the spot where the clothes had turned into stone, I could find nothing but blood. But when I got home I found my friend the soldier in bed, bleeding at the neck like an ox, and a doctor dressing his wound. I then knew he was a turnskin (*versipellis*), nor would I ever have broken bread with him again—no, not if you had killed me."

The title "turnskin" is also in accordance with the Norwegian idea of the werewolf, as the change has always been supposed to have been effected by means of a skin robe, or sometimes a girdle, which could be put on or taken off. In the

Middle Ages the bandit or outlaw was said to wear a *caput lupinum*, or as it was called in England, *wulfesheofod* (wolf's head). King Harald Harfagr had a body of men called *Ulfhednar* (wolf-coated) to distinguish them from the *Berseker* (bear-skin shirted), and these men, according to Hertz, were originally supposed to put on the strength and fierceness of the animal with his skin. The myth of the giant wolf Fenris, the offspring of evil Loki and the giantess Angurboda, who created such a disturbance among the gods in Asgard, gave a semi-religious authority to the man-wolf idea in Scandinavia.

Professor de Gubernatis, in his excellent volume on Zoological Mythology, mentions a she-wolf in an Esthonian story who comes up on hearing the cry of a child, and gives it milk to nourish it. "The story tells us that the shape of a wolf was assumed by the mother of the child herself, and that, when she was alone, she placed her wolf disguise upon a rock, and appeared as a woman to feed the child. The husband, informed of this, orders that the rock be heated, so that when the wolf's skin is again placed upon it, it may be burnt, and he may thus be able to recognise and take back to himself his wife. The she-wolf that gives her milk to the twin brothers, Romulus and Remus, in Latin epic tradition, was no less a woman than the nurse-wolf of the Esthonian story."

In Germany the transformation is believed to take place by means of a belt made of wolf-skin, and should this be unfastened or cut, the man-wolf immediately loses his wolf nature. Mr. Kelly, in his *Curiosities of Indo-European Tradition and Folk Lore*, speaks of these girdles being once for sale. "A sale," says he, "was made by order of the authorities, of a heap of old things that lay in a room in the Erichsburg. Among them were old implements of the chase which had been taken from poachers, and also some werewolf girdles. The Amtmann's man, having a mind to try the effect of the latter, buckled one of them on, was immediately turned into a wolf, and started off for Hunnesrück. The Amtmann rode after him, and cutting at his back with a sword, severed the girdle, whereupon the man resumed his proper shape." Another story is told of a little boy who put on his father's girdle, and was transformed. His father overtook him and unfastened it. The boy afterwards said that, the moment he put

on the girdle, he became ravenously hungry. A common German story, also quoted by Mr. Kelly, is that of a charcoal-burner, who, believing his two companions to be asleep, fastened his wolf-belt round him, became a wolf, and devoured a foal. His comrades, who had only been feigning sleep, had observed him, and when, on their way home, he complained of an internal pain, they told him it was hardly to be wondered at when a man had a whole foal inside him. "Had you said that to me out yonder," replied the werewolf, "you would never have reached home again;" and saying this he disappeared, and was not again seen.

Another German tale tells of a farmer who was driving his wife through a wood, and who suddenly alighted, telling his wife to drive on, and to throw her apron to any beast that might attack her. She was attacked by a wolf, who tore her apron into shreds, and then retreated. Upon her husband's return she saw some threads of her apron sticking between his teeth, and knew he was a werewolf. Iron or steel thrown or held over a werewolf is, in Germany, supposed to split the wolf-skin, so that the man comes out through the forehead. *Loups garoux* are still supposed to linger in some parts of France, but during the sixteenth century many people were burnt to death, having been found guilty of assuming the form and habits of the werewolf. In Portugal, the legend of the *Lobis-homem* still survives, but it appears to be often confused with another superstition, that of the demon horse, the *phooka* of Irish tradition.

The following Polish stories are given in Naaké's translation of Slavonic fairy-tales. Some young people were dancing and enjoying themselves on a hill near the Vistula, when an enormous wolf seized one of the handsomest girls, and was dragging her away. Some of the youths followed and overtook them, when the wolf dropped the girl and stood at bay. As they had no fire-arms the young men stood irresolute, or hurried back for weapons, so the wolf again seized the girl, and bore her into the forest. Fifty years passed, and another feast was taking place on the same hill, when an old man approached. The people invited him to join them, but he sat silently and gloomily down. An old peasant entered into conversation, and was astonished when the stranger hailed him by name as his elder brother, who had been lost fifty years before. The aged stranger

then told the wondering peasants that he had been changed into a wolf by a witch, and had carried away his betrothed from that hill during a festival, that they had only lived together in the forest for a year, and then she had died. He showed them his hands covered with blood, and said: "From that moment, savage and furious, I attacked every one and destroyed every thing I fell in with. It is now four years since I again changed to human shape. I have wandered from place to place. I wished to see you all once more, to see the hut and village where I was born and grew up a man. After that—ah, woe is me! Fly, fly from me. I shall become a wolf again!" He was instantly transformed, howled piteously, and disappeared in the forest for ever.

The second story is of a peasant with whom a witch fell in love. As he slighted her, she told him that when next he chopped wood in the forest he would become a wolf. He laughed at her threats, but they were fulfilled. He wandered about for some years, but would never eat raw flesh, preferring to frighten away the shepherds, and eat their provisions. At last he woke one day from sleep, and found himself once more a man. He immediately ran to his old home, only to find his parents dead, his friends dead or removed, and his betrothed married and with four children. In this and the preceding tale there is a trace of the *Rip van Winkle* incident and its older original. A third story is also given, but space will not allow its transcription.

In the story of the *Lésby*, or wood demon, given in Ralston's *Russian Folk Tales*, there is a strong resemblance to a portion of the former tale, which might suggest that the *Lésby* and the werewolf were not unconnected. The wood demon carries a girl off into the forest, where she lives with him until he is shot by a hunter. The story of *The Treasure* in the same volume speaks of a goat-skin uniting with the body of a pope or priest, so that he could not take it off, thus becoming half animal as in the tradition of the wolf-man.

Dasent, in the introduction to his *Popular Tales from the Norse*, shows that the belief in werewolves was common in Sweden in the sixteenth century. Going back into mythical times, he states that "the *Volsunga Saga* expressly states of Sigmund and Sinfistli that they became werewolves, which, we may remark, were Odin's sacred beasts . . . The wolf's skin . . . was assumed

and laid aside at pleasure." In *Morte d'Arthur* (Book xix, chap. 11) mention is made of "Sir Marrok, the good knyghte, that was betrayed with his wyf, for she made hym seuen yere a werewolf." In a Latin poem of the twelfth or thirteenth century (printed in the *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, ii., 103) there are some lines describing men in Ireland who could change themselves into wolves and worry sheep, and who, if they were wounded in their wolf form, retained the wound on regaining human shape.

Sir Frederick Madden, in his Note on the *Word Werewolf* (William of Palerne, Edit. 1832), states: "In *The Master of Game*, a treatise on hunting composed for Henry the Fifth, is the following passage, 'And somme ther ben . . . that eten children and men, and eten non other fleische from that tyme that thei ben acharmed with mannes fleisch . . . And thei ben cleped werewolves, for that men shulden be war of them.'" The ancient romance, to which this was a modern note, was translated from the French at the command of Sir Humphrey de Bohun, about A.D. 1350, and gives a curious history of a werewolf. Alphouns, eldest son of the King of Spain and heir to the crown, was bewitched by his stepmother Braunde (who wished her own son, Braundinis to be the heir), and turned into a werewolf. This wolf carried away from Palermo William, the child of Embrons, King of Apulia, swam the Straits of Messina with the boy, and took him to a forest near Rome, not doing him any injury. The wolf went to obtain food for the child, and, in his absence, a cowherd found the boy, took him home, and adopted him. William grows up, and is given by the Emperor of Rome to his daughter as a page. The romance deals with many adventures; but, at last, William and the Emperor's daughter, Melior, become lovers and elope together dressed in the skins of two white bears. They wander until they find a den, where they are hidden. When they are suffering from hunger, the werewolf finds them, and brings them cooked beef and two flasks of wine, of which he had robbed two men. The Emperor of Rome, who had betrothed Melior to Partenedon, son of the Emperor of Greece, still pursues the wandering lovers, who are guided and helped by the werewolf. After many adventures, they reach Palermo, which they find besieged by the Spaniards. William, who has a werewolf painted on

his shield, takes the King and Queen of Spain prisoners, and compels Queen Braunde to reverse her enchantment, and to restore the werewolf to his original human form.

Wolves have been so long extinct in England that it is hardly to be expected that there should now linger any tradition of them, but the old werewolf idea seems to have been closely allied with the horrible vampyre. Indeed, so prominent a personage as one of our kings—King John himself—is said, in an old Norman chronicle, to have wandered in this shape after death. The monks of Worcester were compelled, by the frightful noises proceeding from his grave, to dig up his body and cast it out of consecrated ground.

Some old story of a man possessed by the wolf-demon may perhaps have suggested to Shakespeare the outburst of Gratiano to Shylock, who was so vindictively pursuing his victim to obtain his flesh:

Thy currish spirit
Govern'd a wolf; who, hang'd for human
slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
And
Infused itself in thee.

In Normandy, a hundred years ago, the vampyre-like Loup Garou was supposed to be the re-animated corpse of one who had died in mortal sin, and had risen from the grave to prey upon mankind. First, the corpse began to gnaw the face-cloth, then it wailed and shrieked horribly, burst open the coffin, and flames arose from the ground. This pleasant spectre then commenced its midnight murders in the wolf form, and these could only be stopped by the priest taking up the body, decapitating it, and flinging the head into a stream.

It is worth mentioning, in addition to the remark in the beginning of our paper, that the discovery of wild children reared by savage animals in the woods may have strengthened the belief in half-human animals, that Dr. Hubsch, physician to the hospitals of Constantinople, stated that in 1852 he saw a specimen of one of a Central African tribe which possessed tails and fed constantly on human flesh. Mr. Baring-Gould, in his article on Tailed Men (*Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*), gives the history of John Struys, a Dutch traveller, who, he states, visited the Isle of Formosa in 1677, and who thus describes a wild man whom his companions

caught, and who had murdered one of their number: "He had a tail more than a foot long, covered with red hair, and very like that of a cow."

Before taking leave of this interesting but ghastly superstition, I would mention the derivation of the prefix "were" in the word werewolf, as given by Sir Frederick Madden: "Wer," or "wera," a man, being the same as the Gothic "wair," Teutonic "wer," Francic "uara," Celtic "gur," "gwr," or "ur," Irish "fair," Latin "vir," etc.

Gervaise, of Tilbury, writing in the reign of Henry the Second, states: "Vidimus enim frequenter in Anglia per lunationes homines in lupos mutari, quod hominum genus Gerulfos Galli nominant, Angli vero werewulf dicunt; were enim Anglicè virum sonat, wlf, lupum."

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

BY THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN the court reassembled that afternoon, the crowd, both inside and out, was so great, and the interest manifested in the proceedings so little abated, that, at first sight, it seemed as if not one of those who had mustered to hear the reading of the indictment and the opening speech were absent from what was felt would prove the closing act of a drama whose issues were of such terrible importance to the actors most nearly concerned in it.

This was a mistake, however, and while the process of calling over the names of the jury was being gone through, and the barristers were flocking into their places: while some people were wondering what sort of speech Sir James Haycroft would make for the defence, and deciding that it could not be expected to come up to that for the Crown, seeing what an unfortunate case he had in hand; and that, though he had done more for the prisoner than could have been expected in making so much out of that doctor's evidence, he could not but feel he was playing a losing game: while others were even beginning to speculate on what the sentence would be, or to whisper to one another that if it were true, as had been hinted, that there were really no witnesses worth naming for the defence, Sir James might think it more politic to call none at all, and in that case they would be out in time to get some tea before dressing for

dinner—at this time it became apparent to a few that the elderly lady in deep mourning, whom curious fingers had long since pointed out as "the prisoner's mother," was no longer in the seat she had occupied.

It was true. All through that cruel speech of the prosecuting counsel, and the subsequent examination of witnesses, Mrs. Pentreath had borne up with a patience and resolution which surprised even her nephew; never speaking or moving, and only once making a slight negative gesture with her head when, at some particularly trying part, the vicar bent down and gently urged her retiring; but immediately after the doctor gave that favourable answer to the leading question put to him, George felt a sudden and heavy pressure against his knee; and, looking down, saw that his aunt had fainted.

She was quickly and quietly removed—so quietly, indeed, that the incident did not attract the prisoner's notice at all—and, being taken into the air, was speedily restored to consciousness; but her strength had received a severe shake, and if it had needed more than the urgent entreaties of those about her to induce her to remain for the remainder of the trial in the room set apart for witnesses, it was supplied by a message from her son conveyed to her by Mr. Lorton.

"Beg my mother, as she loves me, not to stay for the rest of it. You must see how it will end; and the one thing I couldn't bear would be for her to be there and see it too."

She was not there, therefore, when Sir James began his speech—a very different one truly to that of the learned serjeant whose turn it now was to lean back and contemplate his finger-nails, or shake his wigged head in pitying severity over any point which he wished to emphasise as more than usually weak.

In bluff and hearty tones, just touched with indignation, as one who had been a boy himself, and had boys of his own, Sir James began by repudiating altogether the description of his client as given by the opposing counsel. That young man, he said, had been described (and he hoped the jury would look at him and see whether the description seemed likely to be a true one) as a libertine, a defamer of women, a liar, and a cowardly and treacherous murderer. Well, he thought the heaping up of epithets was always a mistake, as, though there was

certainly a proverb, "If you throw plenty of dirt, some of it is sure to stick," there was also a chance that if you threw too violently you might overshoot the mark altogether. For his part, therefore, without attempting to make a saint or an Admirable Crichton out of his client, he would simply say, that a young man who had served his Queen and his country with honour for nearly ten years, against whose character for uprightness and honesty in every transaction whether of business or play there rested not the slightest shadow; and whose kindness of heart and popularity among his fellowmen and servants had been so touchingly manifested that day by their reluctance to give evidence against him—such a young man could hardly be the savage, dishonest, and cowardly wretch described by the learned serjeant. Of course he had his faults, as "what young man," cried Sir James, "has not? Doubtless he has been too susceptible to feminine charms. Doubtless he has flirted as soldiers will; perhaps, at times, may not have been quite as reticent respecting his flirtations as a cooler or more practised libertine might have been; but this last is an assumption only, resting on nothing but the deceased gentleman's accusation; and, though far be it from me to cast blame on one who was also a gallant officer, and with regard to whom we may quote the saying, '*De mortuis nil nisi bonum*,' still it must be remembered that even the worthiest are liable to error, especially in matters of hearsay, and that in this matter he gave the prisoner no opportunity to explain or right himself. Before a crowd of people, in a public room, he offered this young man the grossest insult one man can offer another, and coupled it with a still more insulting accusation. The prisoner is proud and high-spirited. He lost his temper, and threatened his defamer in return in hot and violent language. Friends, however, interfered, and he was induced to leave the club, and even to allow one of them to accompany him for a considerable portion of the way on his homeward route. Unfortunately—most unfortunately for the prisoner—that friend did not go the whole way with him, and so did not see him into the train which, as we contend, was actually carrying him many miles out of London at the very time the fatal shot which caused the death of the deceased was being fired.

"But in remembering the evidence of this witness as to the prisoner's violent

expressions of wrath at the injury he had received, we must also bear in mind his own independent testimony given in these words: 'I never thought Pentreath meant half what he said; and I made sure he would go home, or I shouldn't have left him.' And now, gentlemen, comes that part of my story in which we can only deal with assumptions. The learned counsel for the Crown has given you his assumptions; and has asked you to convict, on purely circumstantial evidence, this young man before you. He has constructed a plausible and elaborate story to account for a mysterious and deplorable event; but, gentlemen, there are two sides to every story, and if the prisoner's mouth were not closed, and he could go into that box, he would tell you a story, less sensational perhaps, less eloquently worded, but more natural, more in accordance with the character, however faulty, which I have just shown you, and in telling it you he would have at least as much right to claim your credence as any other honourable man in a similar position.

"Gentlemen," said Sir James, "in his name I claim that right now, and I ask you to listen to me;" and so, dropping his voice, went on to give the story of Ernest Pentreath's visit home, of his return journey, his arrival at Major Hollis's lodgings in time to hear the landlady's shriek at discovering the body, and of his natural consternation at finding the man with whom he had come to right himself lying dead at his feet, past either apology or explanation; his hasty threats of vengeance painted forth upon a bloody canvas by the hand of God!

The learned counsel then reverted to the doctor's evidence, both as to the possibility of death having been self-inflicted, and of the probable time of its occurrence, and comparing that time with the hour of its discovery, asked the jury whether it was likely that the prisoner would have remained there all that period alone with his victim without even going near, or touching the latter, so as, at least, to make sure that life was extinct, in which case his hands or clothing must inevitably have acquired some spots or stains of blood from the quantity which had flowed from the deceased.

Going back farther still, he recalled the words of Major Hollis in answer to the prisoner's challenge, "I shall be ready for you whenever you send to me," and stating that he should call another

witness to testify to other words to the same effect uttered by deceased before leaving the club, he went on to suggest that the gallant officer, carrying out this train of thought, might naturally, on his arrival at home, have got out his pistols to examine them; and, either in doing so, or in the act of loading, might have touched the trigger, and so in one second caused his own death instead of that of the prisoner before them.

"Gentlemen," said Sir James very gravely, while so still was the court that a pin might have been heard to fall, and an usher, who came in with a note for Mr. Lorton, almost let it drop under the volley of angry glances directed at him, "gentlemen, you may tell me that these are mere presumptions, and I grant it; but what is the entire case for the Crown but a presumption also? They have admitted that, if the prisoner was really at Kew at the time he specifies, he could not have committed the crime of which he stands accused; but in casting scorn by anticipation on his denial, and calling on us to bring direct evidence in proof of it, they forget that the burden of disproof lies with them; that the law, despite of what has been said in a greater assembly than this, 'does not demand a victim;' and that if with all their formidable array of witnesses—an array I shall not attempt to emulate—they can only bring forward such circumstantial——"

He was interrupted. Immediately on receiving the note above-mentioned, Mr. Lorton had manifested much excitement of manner, and had hurried out of court. His departure excited little attention, however; that of the whole audience, including the prisoner, whose now pale and haggard face showed only too plainly how the long strain of suspense was telling on him, being fixed on the speaker, who, as most there felt, was fighting what he knew to be a losing cause. The solicitor now returned, however, and reaching up to Sir James put a folded paper in his hand, accompanying the action by a few whispered words.

The effect of them was immediately apparent. The eminent counsel took the paper and glanced over it—an almost momentary glance, accompanied by no apparent change of countenance, or any other expression of emotion; but when, after barely a minute's pause, he resumed his speech, it was felt, not by one or two, but by every soul in that assembly that a subtle change had come over it, and one

for which no one, not even he himself, had been prepared.

"Gentlemen," he said abruptly, "I was reminding you that the prosecution have brought forward circumstantial evidence only, and have attempted to strengthen it by a cloud of witnesses. I shall not imitate them. I shall call one witness only, and on her evidence, which is neither presumptive nor circumstantial, I shall leave my case, and leave it with perfect confidence as to your decision, in your hands. Call Esther Mavors."

There was a little stir in court, something like a smothered exclamation from that corner where the vicar still held his watchful position, and the prisoner was seen to start violently and change colour, looking about him with an almost bewildered expression as though the name uttered was that least expected in the world by him; but already it had been repeated by the usher, and next moment there was a movement among the crowd which wedged every available passage, as though someone was trying to make her way through it, and a slender, childish figure being half lifted, half assisted into the witness-box stood there, turning a pale and terrified face upon the judge and jury.

Hetty's face, indeed! But so changed, so sharpened and wasted by pain and sickness, that those who loved it best would hardly have known it. With the bright liquid eyes grown unnaturally large, with hollows in the delicate temples, against which the soft curls clustered with such childish grace, with the lines of her black frock hanging loosely over the frail, shrunken figure, she looked the very ghost of herself, and a ghost so small, so shadowy and youthful, as to provoke a kind of pitying gasp from most of those who looked upon her.

Yet though there was no tinge of colour in the small sweet face, whose timid, wistful expression moved many a heart to compassion, and though she trembled so exceedingly that but for having hold of the rail she must have fallen, Hetty had not lost her self-possession. Her voice was quite audible as she took the oath, repeating the solemn words after the clerk slowly and clearly as a child giving a message it has tried conscientiously to learn; and her clear, truthful gaze never wandered once from the person addressing her, or seemed cognisant of any other presence.

Yet the first question Sir James asked her, "Where were you on the night of the

6th of December between ten and eleven o'clock?" would have been enough to make many girls hesitate before the answer Hetty had to give.

"In Captain Pentreath's room."

She had said it—said it audibly; but there was colour enough in her face now where the blood had rushed up in a fiery tide, and, to the surprise of everybody, the prisoner himself interrupted her.

"You were not! It is not true!" he cried out passionately. "My lord, I don't understand this. I——"

But a stern rebuke from the judge silenced him, and a very few more questions—questions put with a tact and discretion which showed Sir James's ability more than all his previous eloquence—led Hetty on to describe how she had woken up that night, and seeing that it was past ten, and that Mrs. Pentreath had not returned, had gone down to Captain Pentreath's room to look for a photograph; how, whilst doing so, she had heard his latch-key in the door, and fearing to be caught thus in her night-dress, had taken refuge in the box-closet; how, shut up there, she heard him pacing to and fro and talking to himself in his excitement; how at last he had gone away, and she had seized the opportunity to fly to her own room.

So kindly and simply, indeed, did Sir James put his questions, and with such an encouraging semblance of there being nothing surprising or compromising in them, that Hetty's trembling grew less violent as she answered, and her voice, which had sunk almost to a whisper after the first words, gained a little in strength, while two at least of her auditors felt a growing relief and comfort which forced a low "Thank God!" from one of them.

The worst, however, was to come. Sir James, who foresaw it all along, had done his best for her, making her tell the whole story clearly and simply, so that, whatever might be to follow, it should have had its full effect beforehand on the judge and jury, and had even forestalled one question which he knew the opposite side would ask, and probably wished to have satisfied himself.

"How is it that you have not mentioned any of this before? Did you not know the importance it would be to the prisoner?"

There was a moment's hesitation, and Hetty's face grew very pale again as she answered, more falteringly than she had yet done:

"I have been ill—very ill—ever since the inquest. This is the first day I have been let go out."

"So I should infer from your appearance," said the counsel kindly, though he knew she had not answered him. "Indeed, I see you are hardly well enough to be here now, so I will only ask you one more question. Can you swear positively, and without any doubt whatever, that the person who entered Guelder Lodge at half-past ten on the night in question, and whom you heard speaking and moving about in the room where you were hidden, was the prisoner now before you?"

"Quite positively. No one else in the house has a latch-key. Besides, I could not mistake his voice and step. It was he."

"Thank you. I think, then, I may say, and I appeal to the jury to agree with me, that you have saved the prisoner's reputation and delivered him from a very painful situation. My lord, I shall call no other witnesses. The case for the defence is an alibi, and I claim that we have proved it, unless, indeed, my learned brother wishes to cross-examine this—this little girl"—he said the last words intentionally, and as a final effort to spare her—"who has come forward in her present state of weakness, and under such trying circumstances, to testify to the truth."

But his learned brother did wish it—was, indeed, only waiting to pounce upon the witness the moment she was delivered over to him, and he was on his legs almost before Sir James had sat down, the very different tone of his voice making poor Hetty blanch and shiver all over in advance.

"You say you have lived five years with Mrs. Pentreath as her companion. During how much of that time have you known her son?"

"About six months only. He came home from India in August."

"Still, six months is long enough for two young people, a young man and woman especially, to get tolerably intimate."

Hetty made no answer.

"Were you intimate with each other?"

"We were very friendly—yes."

"So friendly that you were in the habit of getting out of bed in the middle of the night, and coming downstairs in your night-dress to search for any little things you wanted—photographs or the like?"

For a moment the girl merely looked at him, such a blaze of wounded dignity and

disgust in her eyes as even silenced a kind of titter which had begun in the gallery, and provoked someone—a woman, too—to cry “Shame!”

“I was not in the habit of doing so. I only did it that once because I wanted the photograph—it was my own—particularly, and I had had no other opportunity of getting it.”

“Was the room kept locked then during the day?”

“No, but he might have been there.”

“And you could not have asked him for it?”

“No, I had done so, and he would not give it me.”

“Then you were not quite on such friendly terms, after all, as you described just now?”

“Not then.”

“And when did these ‘friendly’ terms come to an end?”

“Some little time before. Mrs. Pentreath did not like it.”

“Mrs. Pentreath, the prisoner’s mother, had observed the intimacy between you, and disapproved of it?”

“Yes.”

“Before that had she been friendly to you herself?”

“Oh yes; she always treated me like a daughter.”

“In that case she could hardly have disapproved of your having a merely friendly intimacy with her son. Are you certain that it was nothing more; that you were not lovers, in fact; and that this affair of the photograph—one you had given him, I presume—was not a lovers’ quarrel?”

“No; I never gave it him, and we were never lovers. I have never cared for Captain Pentreath at all except as a friend, and I was very angry indeed when I found he had taken my photograph. I would not allow him to have it.”

“You did quarrel then?”

“Yes; he had spoken rudely to me, and I thought he had acted in an ungentlemanly and dishonourable manner. I said I would complain to his mother.”

“And did you?”

“No—”

“But instead you persuaded Mrs. Pentreath to leave you at home on a plea of illness, and when she was gone, got up and went down to the prisoner’s room in the middle of the night? Are you sure—excuse my asking you the question—are you sure that you were not expecting his return, that your visit was not for the

purpose of making up the quarrel which you already allow—”

The girl lifted her head. Her innocent face was dyed scarlet as though he had struck it a blow, and there were great tears of anguish in her eyes.

“You have no right—it is wicked to ask me that,” she said in a smothered tone. “You know I thought he was in town for the night; that it was only—only because of that—”

“Mr. Serjeant, is this necessary?” said the judge. He had daughters of his own at home, and one—a little thing she was, about Hetty’s age—lying under the turf in Norwood Cemetery with the grass growing over her. “Pray do not exceed your powers.”

“My lord, I am not doing so; but this evidence has come upon us by surprise, has been sprung on us as I may say. If it should be true, then, as my learned friend says, the prisoner has established an alibi; but to prove its truth it is needful to sift it to the bottom, and to make sure that this witness has not been tempted to invent her story—her very improbable story—from any tender feeling for the prisoner. Still, I have no wish to distress her more than I can help, and will, therefore, pass on to other matters.”

He then cross-examined Hetty keenly and closely, as to the position of the furniture in the room; the exact words used by Captain Pentreath; the possibility of her hearing distinctly in the cupboard, where she stated herself to be, and other matters; but these questions Hetty answered with such absolute clearness and simplicity as could hardly fail to impress itself on the audience as the plain, unvarnished truth. Even the learned serjeant felt it, and, leaving that part of the subject, asked her abruptly and almost angrily why, with this knowledge in her mind, she had not spoken out at once and so saved the prisoner all the disgrace and suspense of the detention he had already gone through. Poor Hetty hesitated and turned two wistful, piteous eyes upon the bench; but it was not a case in which the judge could again interfere; and step by step she was made to tell the whole story of her painful situation with regard to Mrs. Pentreath, her doubts and fears, her desire to do right, the utter absence of anyone to counsel her; and the natural shrinking from telling a thing which might put her in an invidious light before those who had already misjudged her. Her voice, which had faltered

more and more, broke down at the end into actual sobbing, and the tears were rolling over her white cheeks as she said :

"I know now it was very wrong to go away ; but I thought he would have other witnesses. I did not think it could all depend on me—and I was afraid. But I always meant to come forward if it was necessary. It was my being taken ill that prevented me. I did not even know what the magistrates had decided till a week ago, and then it was too late except for this. I—I am very sorry if I have hurt anybody. I can't say any more."

And indeed even the jury intimated that they had heard enough. The case which only an hour before had been going against Captain Pentreath with such deadly persistency was virtually at an end, and without even leaving their box, they pronounced a verdict of acquittal.

Five minutes later the court-house was cleared, the heated, tired crowd were pouring out, and Ernest Pentreath was kneeling at his mother's feet with her arms locked round him. The vicar had gone at once to break the news to her lest the shock should be too great; but in doing this he missed something of more importance to himself. The moment Hetty's evidence was over she had disappeared, and, when he hurried back to find her, he could only learn that she had driven away in a cab with a tall woman in black who had been waiting for her.

"But I could not bear to see him or her again just yet. Oh, George, you won't ask me to do so!" Hetty said piteously that evening, in the little back parlour at the Thompsons', where, pillowed on the hardest of horsehair sofas, and attended by the energetic Jane, who had nursed her all through her illness, she had been lying for the past week till that morning.

The vicar looked down at her very tenderly.

"I don't yet know what I shall ask you," he answered. "Do you know what you deserve for leaving me as you did?"

Hetty, I almost feel as if I never could forgive you."

But as he said it with his arms round her, and her weary little head pillowed on his breast, it seemed probable that he might do so some day. Poor Hetty tried to plead for herself.

"But you said your promise must be broken, and I thought——"

"You thought all wrong. I meant my promise of keeping our engagement secret; and I did tell my aunt that very day. Hetty, she wants to see you and ask your pardon."

"Mine! But I ought to ask hers for all I made her suffer. George, will she want me to go back to her?"

"It is no matter if she does, as I want you more, and mean to have you. Don't look so frightened and unhappy, dear child. If you would really rather stay with these good relatives of yours while you are making up a white gown—I don't like you in black, Hetty, white is prettier, and really more bridal."

Hetty made no answer.

"You see, even as it is, Ernest must leave the army," the vicar said after a pause in which not much was said on either side. "Indeed, he has sent in his papers already, and it is almost settled that he and my aunt will travel on the Continent for a while till all this painful affair has blown over. What I have been thinking about at present, however, is something different, namely, whether—I have been offered a living in the lake country, far away in Westmoreland, where there are very high winds—whether those winds would blow my small wife away altogether, or only bring a little colour back into these dreadful white cheeks. What does she think? It is a serious question."

But Hetty answered it without a word at all.

Next Week will be commenced

A DRAWN GAME, A NEW SERIAL STORY,

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT."

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